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**REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY CONDUCTS HISTORIC
LAND TRANSFER TO LOCKE RESIDENTS**
*Signing allows Chinese Americans to finally own the land
under their homes and businesses*

Sacramento, California. Chinese Americans and other residents in the small delta town of Locke signed documents at a special ceremony that allowed them to buy the land under their homes and businesses from the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency. County officials joined more than a hundred people outside the Joe Shoong Chinese School on Main Street to witness the historic signing in the nation's last remaining rural Chinese town (www.locketown.com).



Connie King signs the papers to buy the land under her home in Locke.



The Agency launched efforts to preserve Locke in order to retain the town's history, as well as its unique cultural and architectural elements for future generations to enjoy and learn about; preserve the community's much needed low and moderate income housing; and provide an economic boost and tourism benefits for the Sacramento Delta's business community.

"It's not often that government gets involved on this level and is able to make something happen that is that significant in people's lives and it's personally rewarding," said Stephen Young, County Community Development Director.



A red money envelope is pinned to a merchant's door post in appreciation for the traditional blessing from the Chinese Lion Dancers.

About 20 building owners put their signatures on stacks of transfer and purchase agreements provided by the Placer Title Company. Connie King was among them, a Locke resident who has owned her home since 1949 but has never been allowed to buy the land underneath it because of the California Alien Land Act of 1913 which prohibited people of Asian descent from owning real property. The law was repealed in 1952. As she signed documents, Mrs. King kissed the papers and lifted her hands skyward, thankful for the bittersweet reward for her perseverance on behalf of her late husband and other Chinese Americans who were not here to see this day finally come to pass.

"So I hope today that they are watching us up there and that they are happy with me," said Mrs. King. "I am happy that I am getting the land but I am sad that the original people that started the town of Locke didn't get to buy the land."

Since the 1970's, the Agency been working in Locke providing over \$3 million in financial resources including Community Development Block Grant funds to improve the town and its low income housing. The land transfer was the culmination of a sequence of unique challenges over the past five years that the Agency undertook with the help of the residents of Locke and representatives of the Chinese American community, as well as historic preservation groups and the State Parks and Recreation Department to help save the town of Locke which is National Historic Landmark. The Locke Property Development Company agreed to sell 10 acres in the central part of town so that the Agency could secure a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to improve the sewer system which was critically essential to keep the community functioning. The Agency assisted in stabilizing 11 buildings and installing an extensive fire sprinkler system on the exteriors of 30 buildings along Main Street. The State Department of Parks and Recreation has acquired the nearby Locke Boarding House which will be restored for use as a museum and Visitors Center to preserve the history of Chinese and Chinese Americans in the Delta town. In 2001, the Board of Supervisors directed the Agency to pursue the subdivision of the town and to devise a plan to address the long-term management of the town and preserve the cultural and architectural history of the community.

“What this really does represent is not only a lot of hard work that has got us to this point, but it is the realization of the dreams and the hopes,” said Supervisor Don Nottoli. “I think that prayers have been answered here today and that we will see the preservation of this community, of its history and allow this to be a living, dynamic community for many future generations to come.”



Clarence Chu shows the Certificate of Recognition presented to the town of Locke by Sen. Mike Machado.

The town's property owner was instrumental in making the land transfer possible. Clarence Chu of the Locke Property Development Company sold the land to the Agency on the condition that the parcels be subdivided and sold to the individual building owners. Chu is a member of the Locke Management Association, the non-profit organization that has been created to manage the town into the future. Agency officials say the celebration would not have been possible without Chu's commitment and vision.

“The Agency kept its promise,” said Chu, “and I am a true believer that the town of Locke has finally found the path to success.”

SHRA is a Joint Powers Authority created by the City and County of Sacramento to represent both jurisdictions for affordable housing and community redevelopment needs. SHRA oversees residential and commercial revitalization activities in 13 redevelopment areas throughout the City and County. The Agency is the leading public developer of affordable housing. SHRA has a FY 2004 budget of \$196 million and approximately 328 employees. The Agency approximately 3,200 units of public housing and is one of the largest landlords in Sacramento. SHRA also administers about 11,000 rental assisted vouchers per month.

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